



## Aruba celebrates a very special thirtieth anniversary

It was thirty years ago that for the first time the beautiful aqua blue, officially named “United Nations Blue” of the Aruban flag flew over what island residents like to call “Our Dushi Island” It was with great emotion that this moment was reenacted on Friday evening at the Guillermo Trinidad Stadium in Dakota. Anthony and Angelique Croes lead a torch parade along the same route that was taken from Oranjestad to Dakota to raise the flag for the first time years before. Anthony and Angelique were the brother and sister that as children had officially raise the flag then, and on Friday evening they reverentially handed the flag to another brother and sister, Sheanday and Sheandrick Tromp, to carry on the tradition.

This symbolic act of passing down the mantle of national pride from one generation to the next was the opening of a rousing celebration featuring music performed by the singers of the Tutty Frutty singing group of Maybelline Arends-Kock. Aruba’s National Anthem “Aruba, Dushi Terra” was performed by the grown women that as children had comprised the Tutty Frutty singers of thirty years ago. Orchestro Philharmonico lead by Joy Kock accompanied the many musical numbers, and Padu Lampe, who co-wrote “Aruba, Dushi Terra” along with Rufo Wever, who is now deceased, was in attendance to see his composition performed just as it had been thirty years ago.

Highlighting the evenings festivities was Maikito Croes as he stood at the podium and read the official declaration that had been handed down by the government of the time, which granted Aruba the right to fly their own flag, and the official description. There followed an extravaganza arranged and choreographed by Freddy Montoya, who personally performed a dance titled “ Parha di Libertad; Bird of Liberty.” A number of grammar school children sang chorus to the present day members of the Tutty Frutty singing group, including students from the Maria Goretti College, Colegio Ora UBAO, Pius X School, Colegio Felipe B. Tromp, and the Colegio Laura Wernet-Paskel. Young voices were raised in joyful celebration of this very special day of thirty years ago, and a breathtaking display of pyrotechnics was the perfect finish to this evening of remembrance for this great day in Aruban history. The reenacted by those that took part in it thirty years ago, in partnership with a new generation that will carry this sentiment of pride in their flag and national anthem for another thirty years, is one of many events marking this very special year for the celebration of Himno y Bandera Day on March 18.